

September 2015

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# activehouse newsletter

## Alliance Working for You



### Active House recognised as main EU stakeholder in the building sector

In recent years the Active House Alliance has become more and more known among the European decision makers thanks to its active participation in the policy and technical debates on sustainable buildings. Its latest efforts to create healthy and comfortable lives for buildings' occupants without damaging the climate and environment have been rewarded by the European Commission. It was invited as a member of the main stakeholder group to the Commission's "1st Working Group meeting for the development of a common EU framework of indicators for the environmental performance of buildings".

That meeting (16 June) was attended by recognised stakeholders across the building sector and enabled Active House to contribute pro-actively to work on the development of macro-objectives for resource efficient buildings and thereby help to pave the way towards better building and housing legislations and thus more sustainable Europe.

*"The European Commission has by this initiative taken the first step towards a common understanding of sustainable buildings in Europe and the meeting showed that a balanced focus on Comfort, Energy and Environment is highly relevant",* commented Kurt Emil Eriksen, Secretary General of the Active House Alliance.

### Active House Board fo Advisory Committee Meeting

On 1 September the Alliance held its Advisory Board meeting in London with members from Rockwool, Great Gulf Home, Grundfos, Somfy, Aalborg University, Cenergia, VELUX, SMH Architects and HTO architects present.

There has been decision taken that the Alliance will devote increased attention to three particular target groups including architects, developers and house manufacturers. Furthermore participants agreed on a number of priority areas for the Alliance: simple labelling, a reinforced



communications campaign and better focus on education. Within this framework members have been also evaluating the possibility of a summer school for students and other partners as well as the development of integrated solutions.

## Interview with Connie Enghus, Rockwool

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The upcoming Paris Climate Conference (COP21) in December aims at achieving a legally binding and universal agreement on controlling climate change. In advance of the conference, building associations and sustainable construction companies want to re-emphasize the importance of the links between buildings and climate change. A **“Buildings Day” has finally been placed on the official programme at COP21** after extensive lobbying. A debate will take place on how buildings can make a great difference in reducing GHG emissions and their environmental impact as well as improving quality of life around the world.

Here we ask Connie Enghus, International Market Intelligence Manager and Director at ROCKWOOL International A/S, for her views and the role the Active House Alliance can play.

### **1. What effect do you think the COP21 discussion on climate will have on the buildings sector?**

Buildings are the biggest energy consumer and CO<sub>2</sub> polluters, accounting for approx. 36% of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in EU. On the other hand they also offer the largest single potential for cost-effective energy savings in the short, medium and long-term and provide substantial social benefits in terms of job creation, health, GDP growth and energy security.

I therefore very much hope that the current discussions ahead of COP21 in Paris will help us focus efforts on the sector where there is so much to win, and I hope that the many negative reductions on cost potentials will be included in the debates.

### **2. In parallel to the COP21 negotiations, there is an ongoing review of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). What do you expect from this revision in the light of the COP21 process?**

Reduction of energy waste in our buildings will have a huge impact on our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Therefore, the political focus from the COP21 process should be helpful not only for the possible EPBD revision, but also for improving and strengthening national implementation of the existing directive which is already a very good piece of legislation.

### **3. What are the added values of Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (nZEB) promoted by the EPBD in the fight against climate change?**

The nZEB sets the standard for future new buildings – and, as its name indicates, these should have an energy demand very close to zero. In other words, they will have no negative impact on climate during their use phase. So the nZEB standard is undoubtedly an important milestone in the fight against climate change.

### **4. How can Active House with its principles and tools help to tackle climate change and contribute to better sustainability and environmental consciousness?**

Through a holistic and balanced approach to energy efficiency, indoor comfort and the environmental impacts of buildings, the Active House Alliance also contributes to addressing climate change and increasing environmental awareness. Buildings designed to create a good indoor environment and at the same time have an optimum energy-efficient envelope with a minimum environmental impact are less likely to be demolished before end-of-life, and will

therefore protect the environment over the long term.

## **5. What special role do Active House members and other sustainable construction companies have in this process?**

Active House members play an important role by showcasing the technical solutions and competences to build the post-2020 generation of buildings. We think that sustainable construction companies can contribute by showing that the technology and knowledge gap is non-existent and so we can already significantly reduce huge energy waste in the existing building stock.

## **6. How does ROCKWOOL deal with this challenging responsibility?**

In ROCKWOOL we are actively involved in demonstration projects documenting new solutions, using our own office buildings to test and showcase new solutions. One such initiative was the renovation of part of our headquarters in 2014 (one third of our office space). We succeeded in reducing energy demand by 84%.

Energy efficiency is a first step towards sustainable buildings and optimal energy design is a primary consideration. However, in Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (nZEB) the focus will shift towards the performance of the integral building, including the materials.

The importance of sustainable buildings in Europe is increasing, and for the ROCKWOOL Group the Active House Alliance initiative embracing more parameters is a vehicle to create awareness of fire safety as a sustainability parameter for sustainable building assessments.

Sustainability is based on three pillars - the "3 Ps": people, planet, and prosperity/profit. These pillars are also the three dimensions of sustainable buildings: environmental, social and economic performance. A fire impacts upon all these three. Thus fire safety is often seen as a cost burden rather than as an integral part of sustainable construction. Fire safety protects the building and its occupants across its full life cycle as it ought to be.

We – in the ROCKWOOL Group – deal with this challenging responsibility through a holistic approach and by developing safe products and solutions designed to integrate environmental, economic and social aspects and to create an optimum indoor environment in fire-safe sustainable buildings.

## **Have your say! - Public calls for comments, projects and funding**

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### **Assess the EPBD how well (or badly) it is performing**

The European Commission has launched (30 June) a public consultation among stakeholders on its review of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). This is an opportunity to give feedback to the key decision makers about whether the directive has met its aims. The consultation will also explore issues surrounding the Smart Finance for Smart Buildings initiative as well as the directive's tie-ins with other energy policy areas.



Public authorities, Member States, private bodies, industry associations, SMEs, consultancies, other relevant stakeholders and individual citizens (including from non-EU countries) are being encouraged to submit their ideas. The deadline is 31 October.

For more information see [here](#).



## New EU funding opportunities for sustainable buildings

The European Commission's draft Horizon 2020 work programmes for the 2016-2017 period (published in September) set out project proposals in the area of energy technologies and environment & climate change for which funding will be available under the EU's biggest research and innovation programme.

The draft work programme "Secure, Clean and Efficient Energy" focuses on three priorities: Energy Efficiency, Low Carbon Technologies and Smart Cities and Communities. Research and demonstration activities within energy efficiency will centre on buildings and heating and cooling. The one on "Climate Action, Environment, Resource Efficiency and Raw Materials" includes the core issues for the construction sector of "Industry 2020 in the Circular Economy" and "Smart and Sustainable Cities".

The final documents are due by mid-October. For the current draft programmes see [here](#).

## ICP Europe: new energy efficiency marketplace

Investor Confidence Project (ICP) Europe intends to build a marketplace for standardized energy efficiency projects that will help streamline transactions and increase the reliability of projected energy savings. The marketplace would connect project developers with a wide range of investors including both equity and debt finance companies, property owners and managers, energy service providers, insurers, engineers, utilities as well as a range of NGO and public sector organizations.

Under this scheme, ICP Europe is developing a set of *Energy Performance Protocols* specific to the European sector in order to streamline how energy efficiency projects are developed and measured. According to the developers, they will set out a clear road map "from retrofit opportunity to an investor-ready energy efficiency project". Stakeholder inputs on the first draft protocols are welcome before planned publication in October.

For more information see [here](#).



## Nordic Built Cities Challenge Competition

The Nordic Built Cities Challenge competition will be built around six urban challenges. This is an open, multidisciplinary competition for developing viable solutions to designated Nordic urban challenges - in a smart, livable and sustainable way.

The selected urban challenges are very diverse in their format and scope, but what they have in common is that they all call for innovative and multidisciplinary solutions in a

Nordic setting. The organisers want solutions that embrace the circular economy, sustainable lifelines and “climate-smart” living as well as they call for models for revitalized transport hubs and climate adoption, furthermore fresh ideas for sustainable family homes on steep terrains.

The deadline for submitting your inputs is 17 December. Local juries will then select four finalists in each competition, who will continue to the next phase in the competition running from February to May 2016.

For more information see [here](#).

## Events

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### Active House presentation in Italy

On 7 October the Active House Alliance will present its core principles in Verona, Italy at an event organised by the Passive House Institute's Italian branch where participants will exchange ideas about the first successful examples of active houses and discuss the next steps. Besides an address from Kurt Emil Eriksen, Secretary General of the Active House Alliance, Architect Samuel Buraschi, President of the Passive House Institute Italy, will speak on the common values and differences of these two sustainable housing concepts.

For more information see [here](#).

### World Efficiency Show & Congress in Paris

The World Efficiency Show & Congress in Paris is the first biennial event for policy makers and businesses looking for resource and climate solutions. This will run 13-15 October in Paris and will create meeting space for participants. As part of the programme on 13 October a conference on Nordic Efficiency entitled “Nordic climate solutions to emission reduction” will take place with political representatives from all five member states of the Nordic Council of Ministers (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden). They will demonstrate a shared commitment to a positive result at COP21 in the presence of the French Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy, Ségolène Royal.

For more information see [here](#).



### AktivPlus General Assembly in Frankfurt

On 29-30 October AktivPlus will hold its yearly gathering in

cooperation with the City of Frankfurt am Main, Germany. The programme starts on Thursday with the General Assembly, where also Active House members will be represented. This will be followed by a conference to discuss the issue of cost-effectiveness of energy-efficient construction methods, as well as a presentation to showcase the results of the first pilot phase for AktivPlus buildings covering 26 pilot projects. The next day will offer several workshops on AktivPlus standards and a guided tour to a recently opened active town-house and the association's new HQ.

For more information see [here](#).

## Building Green exhibition and matchmaking in Denmark

**BUILDING GREEN**

The 5th Building Green exhibition will take place on 28-29 October in Forum Copenhagen, Denmark. This trade show is the biggest market place in Denmark for sustainable design, construction and the built environment. Among others the event is offering bilateral on the spot meetings for participants so companies and researchers can extend and buttress their networks as well as initiating new cooperation activities.

For more information see [here](#).



## Buildings Day at COP21 in Paris

Within the framework of the upcoming Paris Climate Conference (COP21), on 3 December the first “Buildings Day” will be organised as part of the official programme to present how the building and construction sector is able to tackle climate change. It will focus on public strategies and policies, finance and value chain solutions to reduce carbon emissions of the sector. Furthermore the event will also provide an opportunity to launch an alliance of organizations that collectively commits to more sustainability in the sector.

For more information see [here](#).

## World Sustainable Energy Days 2016 in Austria

World Sustainable Energy Days 2016 will take place on 24 - 26 February 2016 in Wels, Austria. One of the largest annual conferences in this field in Europe, it offers a combination of events on sustainable energy including: (1) The European Nearly Zero Energy Buildings Conference; (2) The Young Researchers Conference: Energy Efficiency in Buildings; (3)

**World Sustainable Energy Days 2016**

24 - 26 February 2016, WELS / AUSTRIA

Deadline  
Call for Papers  
9 October 2015

The Smart Facade Materials Conference; and (4) Technical Site Visits to Nearly Zero Energy Buildings. The call for papers and speakers on the topic of “energy efficient and sustainable buildings” is open until 9 October 2015.

For more information see [here](#).

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## Interesting Case

Do you have an Active House case you would like to share with other website viewers? Please feel free to upload your case to our website. It's free and easy. Follow these simple [instructions](#).

## Members

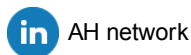


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## Press and communication



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